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Ford defense of CIA in Chile stirs debate

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President Ford's admission, at his news conference Tuesday, that the United States engaged in covert activities in Chile, and his defense of them has stirred vigorous debate here.

Some deplore the covert activities, feeling that it is improper for the U.S. to conduct undercover intervention in the affairs of countries with "duly elected" governments.

Others deplore the fact that the President admitted these activities, which recall President Eisenhower's famous admission that the U.S. was flying the U-2 spy plane over the Soviet Union.

CIA activity defended

And there are those who have seen much of Soviet and other Communist activity in various parts of the world who ardently defend the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency in Chile and elsewhere as an essential part of U.S. foreign policy and security.

What the President said was that the CIA activities were justified because "there was an effort being made by the government of Salvador Allende to destroy opposition news media and to destroy opposition political parties."

He added that the Soviet Union spends a great deal more on it than the U.S.

In that connection a book, "KGB," by John Barron, just published by Readers Digest Press, says that "the United States has been able to trace millions of dollars delivered from Moscow to parties in the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe. Mexican security agents observed a KGB officer pass what turned out to be \$30,000 to a party representative in the summer of 1968 when young Communists were preparing the riots that nearly forced cancellation of the Olympic Games."

The author says the Russians maintain hemispheric headquarters for covert activities in Mexico and that the Cuban DGI intelligence organization is one of its most widely used instruments.

It was noted among those debating the President's remarks that he addressed himself only to the more positive activities — supporting non-Communist newspapers, electronic media, and parties.

But CIA director William E. Colby, in testimony delivered before a closed congressional committee meeting, is reported to have admitted that \$8 million was spent in Cuba between 1970 and 1973, and included \$350,000 to bribe members of the Chilean Congress who were to vote on Salvador Allende's bid for the presidency.

Further repercussions

In a different repercussion from the disclosure of CIA activities in Chile, including expenditures to "destabilize" the Allende regime after its election, some high-ranking State Department officials, as well as former CIA director Richard Helms, are being accused of misleading the Senate subcommittee on multinational corporations which was investigating the activities against the Allende regime undertaken by ITT.

Mr. Helms; Charles A. Meyer, former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs; Edward M. Korry, Ambassador to Chile from 1967 to 1973; and William V. Broe, former director of CIA clandestine activities, may even be accused of perjury, because they indicated in

sworn testimony that the U.S. was not engaged in undercover activities against the Chilean regime.

Ex-CIA official's retort

"What hypocrisy!" was the comment of one distinguished official who formerly directed CIA activities, when informed of the charges against Mr. Helms and the others.

"Do they expect every public official upon demand to blurt out everything he knows about the covert and espionage activities of his government? Of course they had to deny it. The only person who can make public avowals of such activities is the President, and he has chosen to do so.

"For the rest, the congressional oversight committees, the subcommittees on intelligence of the Senate and House Armed Services and Appropriations committees, are informed.

"The concept of intervention in foreign countries to support of some political parties and newspapers opposed to the Communists' opposition," this official said, "dates back a quarter century to the beginning of the Marshall Plan. It was meant to enable center and parties to the right and left of center to survive against enormous expenditures of the opposition.

"The Chilean operation was the last in a long series of operations of this kind."

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